

Sublime Aspiration

A descriptive translation of Ḥusn al-Maqṣid fī Āmal al-Mawlid

الْأَعْظَمَيْهِ كَمَا يَصِفُ عَلَى الْمَوْلَدِ فِي كُلْسَهِ تَلَاهُمَائِهِ الْفَعْدِيَّهِ
 ثَالِيَهِ بَنْتِ خَلَّابٍ فِي تَرْحُمِهِ لِخَاطِفِهِ أَبِي الْخَطَابِ بْنِ دِحْيَهِ أَنَّهُ مَنْ
 احْتَارَ بِأَرْسِيلٍ وَوَجَدَ مَلِكَهَا الْفَضْلَ يَعْتَنِي بِالْمَوْلَدِ الْبَنْوَيِّ فَعَمِلَ
 لَهُ كِتَابَ الْشُورِ فِي مَوْلِدِ الْبَشِيرِ وَالشَّدِيرِ وَفَرَأَهُ عَلَيْهِ بِنْقُسِيهِ
 فَأَجَازَهُ كُلَّ ذِلْكَ بِالْأَقْفَادِ بِيَارِ فَرَحِمَهُمَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَرَضِيَ عَنْهُمَا
 وَأَتَابَهُمَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَكَرِمَهُمَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَقَدْ حَرَّ شَنَعُ مَشَاهِدِهَا
 لِخَاطِفِهِ أَبِي الْفَضْلِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ حَمْرَ الْعَسْقَارِيِّ رَحْمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى
 فَعَلِمَ الْمَوْلُودُ الْمَذْكُورُ عَلَى اسْلَمِ تَابِتِ مُعْتَدِلِ وَهُوَ مَا يَنْتَهِي
 إِلَيْهِ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ مِنْ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدَّرَ الْمَدِينَهُ
 فَوَجَدَ الْيَهُودَ يَصُومُونَ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ حَسَانَهُمْ فَقَالُوا
 هَذَا يَوْمُ أَخْرَجَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فَعَالَ أَنَا أَخْرَجْتُهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَهَمَّهُ

IMAM JALALUDDIN AL-SUYUTI

RIDAWI
 رِدَا
 PRESS

S U B L I M E A S P I R A T I O N

১০০

G R E A T S H O R T B O O K S

Sublime Aspiration

A descriptive translation of Ḥusn al-Maqṣid fī Āmal al-Mawlid

IMAM JALALUDDIN AL-SUYUTI رحمه الله

Translated by
ABU HASAN

RIDAWI
رضا
PRESS



Sublime Aspiration of the Mawlid Celebration

*Original Arabic Work by
Imam Jalāluddīn Abdu'r Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī*

*Translation and Footnotes
Abu Hasan*



*Acknowledgements
Abu Nibras, Aqdas, Noori*

The cover image is from a manuscript of *Ḩusn al-Maqṣid* and the text shows Ibn Ḥajar's quote. See Page 17.

Copyright © Ridawi Press
Rabi' al-Awwal 1434/January 2013
Version 1.0

feedback@ridawipress.org
copyright@ridawipress.org
complaints@ridawipress.org
admin@ridawipress.org

*The author can be contacted at:
abu.hasan@ridawipress.org*

Please include the name of the book in the subject of your mail for specific queries or comments. Permission is hereby granted to reproduce or utilise this material in any form or by any means, electronic or otherwise, as long as the content remains unchanged. This book is also made freely available by Ridawi Press and can be downloaded from: www.ridawipress.org. Permission is granted to anyone to print this book for free distribution or for sale. Ridawi Press acknowledges that it costs money to print and distribute books, and it may therefore be necessary for publishers to recover this cost by selling it at a reasonable price. Ridawi Press does not benefit financially from the sale of these books, nor solicits any royalties. Permission is also granted to publishers to reprint in their own name provided the following notice is included in the colophon: "Reprinted with royalty-free permission from Ridawi Press".



الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوة والسلام على سيد المرسلين وعلى آله الطيبين وأصحابه الطاهرين

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allāh tāālā, and blessings be upon His elect slaves. A question was asked about celebrating the birthday¹ of the Prophet ﷺ in the month of Rabiý al-Awwal and about:

- its legal status according to shariáh
- whether it is commendable or a reprehensible act
- whether a person participating in it merits reward² or not

Essentially, Mawlid is a gathering of people in which the Qur’ān is recited, events surrounding the birth³ [and proclamation] of the Prophet ﷺ and [miraculous] signs that appeared during his blessed birth are narrated. A banquet is held and the assembly disperses thereafter, without doing anything further. This is a praiseworthy innovation and the person doing it will be rewarded, because of venerating the Prophet ﷺ and expression of happiness and gratulation upon the blessed birth of the Messenger ﷺ.

¹ Mawlid, Mawlūd, Mīlād: celebration of the birthday of the Prophet ﷺ.

² *thawāb*: reward in the hereafter; that is, whether it is counted as a good deed deserving reward in the hereafter.

³ *mabda' amri'n nabiy*: the beginning of the Prophet's ﷺ history.

History of Celebrating the Blessed Mawlid

The person who started this practice was the ruler of Arbil,⁴ King Mužaffar⁵ Abū Saýid Kawkabūrī ibn Zaynuddīn Álī ibn Buktikkīn - a glorious king and a magnanimous leader. He is remembered for beautiful monuments and it was he who built the Muzaffari Mosque⁶ on the slopes of Mount Qasiyūn.

Ibn Kathir⁷ has mentioned in his historical work⁸ that he would celebrate Mawlid in the month of Rabiý al-Awwal – and the celebrations would be elaborate. He was chivalrous, brave, fearless, intelligent and also a scholar; may Allāh táālā have mercy upon him and honour his resting place.

[Ibn Kathir said:] Shaykh Abu'l Khaṭṭāb ibn Dīḥyah⁹ wrote a book on the Mawlid of the Prophet ﷺ named *At-Tanwīr fī Mawlidīl Bashīr an-Nadhīr* upon which he was given a present of a thousand gold coins.¹⁰ His reign was lengthy until his demise in Akka, where he was blockaded by the Franks in the year 630. He was a man of praiseworthy character and a noble soul.

⁴ Erbil, Irbil, Arbil; in today's Iraq. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erbil>

⁵ Mužaffaruddīn Abū Saýid [549-630] Kūkūburī or Kawkabūrī

⁶ Also known as the Hanabila Mosque or the Darwîsh Pasha Mosque. "The mosque is situated in the Salihîyya area of Damascus, on a side street off Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi Lane, outside the fortifications of the old city. It is the first Ayyubid monument built in Damascus and the oldest surviving mosque after the Umayyad Mosque (b. 709-715)." See archnet.org.

⁷ Ḥāfiẓ Ímāduddīn Abu'l Fidā'a Ismā'īl ibn Úmar ibn Kathīr al-Dimashqī [701-774] famous for his historical work *Bidāyah wa'n Nihāyah* and his Qur'ān commentary; author of many other works which were well received in his lifetime: *Sharḥ al-Bukhārī* (incomplete), *Tabaqāt al-Fuqahā Shāfi'iyīn*, *Qaṣaṣu'l Anbiyā'a* and his magnum opus *Jāmīy al-Masānīd wa's Sunan* which according to the plan of the author was a collection of 100,000 ḥadīth, ordered by alphabetical list of companions in those narrations. [Ibn Kathīr had compiled only 80,000 when he passed away and his grandson completed it].

⁸ *Al-Bidāyah wa'n Nihāyah*, 17/205; Events of the Year 630.

⁹ Úmar ibn al-Ḫasan ibn Álī ibn Muḥammad, Abu'l Khaṭṭāb ibn Dīḥyah al-Kalbī [544-633] literary figure, historian, ḥadīth master and judge. He travelled to Morocco, Levant, Iraq, Khorasan and finally settled in Egypt. [Wafyāt al-Aáyān 1/381, Mīzān al-Iýtidāl 2/252, Lisānu'l Mīzān 4/292, Shadharātu'dh Dhahab 5/160, Siyar al-Aálam 5/44]

¹⁰ Dīnar: gold coin weighing approximately 4.25g; thus 1000 coins would be 4.25 kilogram of gold, which in 2013 costs approximately \$225,250 @ \$53/gram.

Ibn al-Jawzi's grandson¹¹ says in *Mir'āt al-Zamān* narrating from a person who attended a banquet held during Mawlid celebrations that he mentioned the following in the feast: 5000 sheep and their grilled heads, 10,000 chickens, 100 horses,¹² 100,000 [earthern] bowls and 30,000 plates of sweets. Prominent scholars and sufis attended the Mawlid; the king he would seek them and retire with them and the sufis would recite poems,¹³ starting the afternoon [continuing in the night and] until dawn. The king would also whirl¹⁴ in ecstasy with them. He would spend 300,000 dīnār¹⁵ on Mawlid celebrations every year. He had built a guest house for those who came from afar regardless of where they came from, or their bearing – he would spend 100,000 dīnār every year for the maintenance of this guest house.

¹¹ Yūsuf ibn Qizz/Guliy or Qizzguli ibn Ábdullāh Abu'l Mužaffar Shamsuddīn, the maternal grandson [Sibt] of Imām Abu'l Faraj Ábd ar-Rahmān ibn al-Jawzī is a prominent historian [581-654] and author of *Mir'ātu'z Zamān fi Tārikhi'l A'yān*, *Tadhkiratu Khawāṣu'l Ayimma*, *Kanz al-Mulūk*, *Muntahā as-Sūl fi Sirāti'r Rasūl*. [Miftāhū's Sādah 1/208, Jawāhīru'l Mudiyyah 2/230, Dhayl Mir'ātu'z Zamān 1/39]

¹² It is prohibitively disliked in the Ḥanafi madh'hab but permitted in other madh'hab; there are ḥadīth that mention permissibility of eating horse meat.

¹³ *Samā'a*: which is commonly translated as music; but this was without musical instruments and just vocals.

¹⁴ *Raqṣ*: those listening to devotional poetry sometimes jump in a state of ecstasy and joy which is termed *ḥājal*. It is reported in *Musnad al-Bazzār*, *Musnad Imām Aḥmed*, *Al-Ādāb* and *Sunan al-Kubrā* of Bayhaqī, *Mukhtārah* of Ḏiyā'a al-Maqdisi, narrating from Sayyidunā Álī Ḥāfi that he said:

I came to RasūlAllāh ﷺ with Jaáfar and Zayd and he ﷺ told Zayd: "You are my bondsman" and he jumped with joy; [and Álī narrates] he ﷺ told Jaáfar: "You resemble me the most in appearance and character" and he began jumping with joy behind Zayd; [and Álī narrates] he ﷺ told me: "You are from me, and I from you" and I began to jump behind Jaáfar. [*Musnad Imām Aḥmed*: *Musnad Álī ibn Abi Ṭālib*]

Dancing mentioned here is involuntary and spontaneous jumping for joy, not the deliberate synchronous and breaking movements, sashaying like women or shaking the midriffs and hips; tapping toes rhythmically, prancing and chassé etc. which are all forbidden forms of dancing. The dancing of Abyssinians mentioned in the ḥadīth is about irregular movements and play-acting a sword-fight with weapons, and jumping. Allāh tāālā knows best.

¹⁵ As mentioned earlier, dīnār was a gold coin weighing 4.25 grams; 300,000 coins are approximately 1275 kilograms of gold, which would cost 67.5 million US dollars in 2013.

He would pay 100,000 dīnār to the Franks as ransom for Muslim prisoners; he would pay 30,000 dīnār for the noble sanctuaries, and water supply systems on the road to Hijaz. All this was apart from what he gave as charity in private. His wife, Rabiāh Khātūn bint Ayyūb [the sister of the victorious king Ṣalāḥuddīn]¹⁶ says that he would wear a shirt made of *kirbas*, a rough material worth five silver coins.¹⁷ She says that she criticised him for this and he replied: “That I should wear clothes worth five dirhams and give away the rest is better than wearing expensive clothes and abandoning the poor and the destitute”.

Ibn Khallikān¹⁸ in his biographical notice on Abi'l Khaṭṭāb ibn Dīyah says:

He was a prominent scholar, and well-known among the elite; he came from Morocco and travelled to the Levant and Iraq and passed through Arbil in the year 604 where he encountered the king Muẓaffaruddīn ibn Zaynuddīn celebrating the birthday of the Prophet ﷺ. So, he wrote the book, *The Illumination: On the Birthday of the Bearer of Glad Tidings, the Warner*,¹⁹ and recited it in front of the king, who rewarded him with a thousand gold coins.

He also said:

We have heard him [recite the mawlid] in six gatherings in the Sultan's presence in the year 625.



¹⁶ Famously known as Sultan Salāḥuddīn Ayyūb or Saladin in the west, he is the victorious king and the vanquisher of crusaders, Abu'l Muẓaffar Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb [532-589] who won back Jerusalem for Muslims. [*Bidayah wa'n Nihāyah*, 16/651, Events of the Year 589]

¹⁷ Dirham: silver coin; a thousand silvers equalled one gold coin, a dīnār.

¹⁸ Ḥāmid ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abū Bakr ibn Khallikān [602-672] al-Arbili: authority on history and literature, author of *Wafyāt al-Ayān*.

¹⁹ *Al-Tanwīr fī Mawlidī'l Bashīr al-Nadhīr*

FĀKIHĀNĪ'S OBJECTION

Shaykh Tājuddīn Úmar ibn Álī al-Lakhmī al-Sakandarī, famously known as Al-Fākihānī,²⁰ a Mālikī scholar of later times claimed that celebrating Mawlid is a reprehensible innovation. He wrote an epistle named, *Al-Mawrid fī'l Kalāmī álā Ámal al-Mawlid*. I will quote his statement below in full and thereafter, I will examine it point by point.

Fākihānī said:

Praise be to Allāh who has guided us to follow the leige lord of Messengers; He has aided us by guiding us toward pillars of religion and has made it easy for us to follow traditions of our pious ancestors²¹ [and thus] our hearts are filled with the knowledge of shariāh and absolute, manifest truth; [He has] cleansed our hearts from the calamities of modern times and innovation in religion.

I praise Allāh, for bestowing [upon us] His favour by [granting] radiant faith. I thank him for putting [us on] the right path by holding fast unto a strong bond [of faith]. I bear witness that there is no God except Allāh tāālā, that He is alone and hath no partner. I [also] bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is His slave and His Messenger – the master of all from the beginning to the end – may blessings of Allāh tāālā be upon him, his progeny, his companions, his blessed and chaste wives – the mothers of believers. May these blessings abide [and increase] until Judgement day.

Thereafter: a question was asked by a group of blessed folk concerning gatherings in the month of Rabi'y al-Awwal which are called *Mawlids*. Is there a basis in the shariāh for such Mawlids? Or is it a bidāh and [reprehensible] innovation in religion?

I decided to answer this as a clarification and to explain the issue; and thus I have replied. Only Allāh tāālā gives success.

I do not know any basis for this 'Mawlid' in either the book of Allāh tāālā or the tradition of RasūlAllāh ﷺ; nor has it been reported as practiced by any scholar of our nation, who are our religious leaders and are firm in the tradition of elders.

²⁰ Al-Fākihānī [654-734] is a famous grammarian and Mālikī scholar from Alexandria. When he visited Damascus, he met with Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr, the author of *Bidāyah wa'n Nihāyah* – and they narrate from each other.

²¹ *salaf al-ṣālihīn*

Rather, it is a bidáh, innovated by the idle and indolent; a vain desire which is alluring to freeloaders. Our proof: when we evaluate this action, it has to fall in one of the following five categories:

1. Wājib – Obligatory
2. Mandūb – Supererogatory
3. Mubāh – Permissible
4. Makrūh – Disliked
5. Ḥarām – Prohibited

By consensus, it is not wājib. Neither is it mandūb; because, the principle for mandūb is that it is prescribed by the shariáh [as optional] without criticising those who omit it. This has neither been prescribed in the shariáh, nor was it practiced by the companions, their followers or pious scholars – as far as I know. And this shall be my answer, if I am asked about it on Judgement day. It is not permissible either, because innovation in religion cannot be deemed permissible according to consensus of all Muslims.

Obviously, it has to fall in one of the two [remaining] categories: disliked or prohibited [makrūh or Ḥarām] and [the ruling] varies according to two possibilities.

- When a person celebrates the Mawlid from his own wealth – for his family, friends and relatives; and restricts it to a banquet without approaching anything sinful. This is what we have described as a disliked and ugly bidáh, because none among our pious predecessors – jurists and scholars of Islām, honoured and celebrated Muslims among them have done this.
- When accompanied with enormities and misdemeanour; such things which should be so much that a person donates [for Mawlid] with a heart ache and is forced to give. Scholars have said that taking money from someone by abashment is the same as taking [forcibly] by the sword.

Particularly, when such gatherings also have singing – after filling their stomachs – accompanied by forbidden musical instruments – drums and clarinets, intermingling of men with young boys, men and charming women – both flirtatious and honourable ones; and dancing by twisting and sashaying, and being immersed in frolic and merriment, heedless of that [final] day of trepidation.

Similarly, in private gatherings of women, they raise their voices in singing [and thus] far removed from Qur'ân recitation and litanies; foregoing recommended and commonly accepted practices and neglecting the saying of the Almighty: **Verily, your Lord Sees everything.**²² Nobody disagrees that all such things are forbidden, and no upright person will consider these acts as praiseworthy. Rather these things are the fancy of such creatures whose hearts are dead and have not renounced sin and evil. Additionally, they consider it to be a form of worship, instead of a reprehensible and forbidden act; **verily, we belong to Allâh and toward Him is our return.**²³

In the beginning, Islâm was [deemed] quaint and so shall it become as it was in the beginning.²⁴ May Allâh tââlâ reward our Shaykh Al-Qushayri who has said:

**Evil is admired and estimable
And good is decried as evil in these difficult times of ours;
People of knowledge have retreated in burrows
And ignoramuses have occupied important positions
They have deviated from righteousness and that which they profess
Has no relation to the glorious past
Therefore, I tell the pious and the Godfearing,
And those who care for their religion, when they are intensely grieved:
Do not retreat from your stations because the time has come
And the age in which you live is that of *ghurbah*²⁵**

Imâm Abû Ámr al-Álâ'a has said it rather well: People will be doing well until they start doing strange things. Moreover, he ﷺ passed away in Rabi'âl-Awwal, the same month in which he ﷺ was born. Therefore, celebration in this month should be no more important than mourning in it.

This is my stand, and I hope Allâh tââlâ will accept my effort.



²² Sûrah Fajr, 89:14. إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَأْمُرُ صَنَادِ

²³ Sûrah Baqarah, 2:156. إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِفُونَ

²⁴ Ḥadîth reported by Imâm Aḥmed ibn Ḥanbal from ʻAbd ar-Râḥmân ibn Shaybah al-Ashjâyî; *Majmâ' al-Zawâyid* of Nûruddîn al-Haythâmî, 7/278.

²⁵ *ghurbah*: outlandish, quaint. The time foretold in Ḥadîth when true Islâm will be considered as outlandish and true adherents will be looked upon as abnormal and eccentrics.

APPRAISING FĀKIHĀNĪ'S OPINION

I have quoted Fākihānī in full above from his aforementioned book and I shall examine [his objections one by one] below.

Fākihānī said:

I do not know any basis for this 'Mawlid' in either the book of Allāh tāālā or the tradition of RasūlAllāh ﷺ

Not knowing something does not mean that such a thing does not exist. Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l Faḍl Ibn al-Ḥajar²⁶ has mentioned a basis in the tradition of the Prophet ﷺ for this practice [of celebrating Mawlid] and I have located a second ḥadīth which I will mention presently.



Fākihānī said:

Rather, it is a bidāh, innovated by the idle and indolent... not pious scholars

We have explained earlier that the practice was started by a just and scholarly king – with the intention of earning the favour of Allāh tāālā. This was done in the presence of scholars and righteous folk and none among them demurred. Ibn Dīyah was pleased [and did not see anything wrong] with it and he even wrote a book for this purpose. These are pious scholars who permitted it, endorsed it and did not oppose it.



Fākihānī said:

Neither is it mandūb; because, the principle for mandūb is that it is prescribed by the sharīah

Requirement by the sharīah for mandūb is sometimes known by texts, and sometimes it is proven by analogy in the absence of textual evidence as we shall see shortly.



²⁶ Imām Aḥmed ibn Ḥāfiẓ al-Kinānī, known as Ibn Ḥajar al-Āsqalānī [773-852.] Arguably the greatest ḥadīth scholar since his time; author of the most famous commentary on Bukhārī.

Fākihānī said:

Neither is it permissible, because innovation in religion cannot be deemed permissible according to consensus of all Muslims.

This is not acceptable because, bidáh is not restricted to only disliked and forbidden. In fact, it can also be permissible, recommended or obligatory [*mubāh, mandūb and wājib*].

What is Bidáh?

Imām Nawawī²⁷ ﷺ said in *Tahdhīb al-Asmā'a wa'l Lughāt*:²⁸

In the parlance of shariāh, bidáh means those [new] things that were not present in the period of RasūlAllāh ﷺ. Bidáh is broadly classified as good or ugly. Shaykh Ízzuddīn ibn Ábd al-Salām²⁹ said in *Qawāyid*:³⁰ "Bidáh can fall in any of these categories: *wājib, ḥarām, mandūb, makrūh* or *mubāh*. The method to ascertain its class is to appraise it vis-à-vis the principles of shariāh. If it fulfils the criteria for *wājib*, [such a bidáh] becomes an obligatory bidáh. If it matches the criteria for *ḥarām*, it becomes forbidden, and it is *mandūb*, *makrūh* or *mubāh* if it matches corresponding criteria."

He mentioned examples for each of these five categories and he said about recommended and praiseworthy bidáh:

Establishing schools, cloisters, building bridges and alcoves,³¹ every good thing or charity which was not established among the first period of Muslims. [Like] *tarāwiḥ*: supererogatory prayers in Ramaḍān; expounding finer points of *taṣawwuf*; theological discourse and refutations; gatherings to discuss and elucidate proofs for religious issues, as long as such conferences are for the sake of Allāh tāālā.

²⁷ Muhiyuddīn Abū Zakariyyah Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf ibn Murrī al-Shāfiyyī an-Nawawī [631-676] is a major imām of fiqh and ḥadīth.

²⁸ *Tahdhīb*, 3/22; [Part Two, Volume One]

²⁹ Sultān al-Úlamā Shaykh Ízzuddīn Ábd al-Ázīz ibn Ábd al-Salām al-Sullamī [577-660] is a famous Ashārī-Shāfiyyī mujtahid imām.

³⁰ *Al-Qawāyid al-Kubrā*, 2/337. See Appendix B for the full translation of the topic.

³¹ *qanāṭir*

Imām Bayhaqī³² in *Manāqib al-Shāfiyī*, reports from Imām Shāfiyī ﷺ :

Innovations are of two kind:

- The first kind which opposes either the Book, the hadith, athar³³ or ijmāā,³⁴ such an innovation is deviance [from the straight path].
- The second is that which is innovated for a good [cause] and does not oppose or contradict [Qur'ān or ḥadīth]; this is not a blameworthy innovation.

Sayyidunā Úmar ﷺ said concerning [tarāwīḥ] prayers in Ramadān: "**What a fine innovation is this!**"³⁵ That is, an innovation, and a practice without precedent, but which does not refute or contradict earlier practice.

This refutes the following assertion of Shaykh Tājuddīn [al-Fākihānī]:

It cannot be a mubāḥ... as we have described, it is a disliked innovation

This innovation [of Mawlid] neither opposes the Book, nor ḥadīth, nor practice of companions and their followers, nor consensus. Therefore it is not deplorable, and according to Imām Shāfiyī's principle: It is a praiseworthy deed which was not in vogue in the first generation [of Islām]. Because holding a banquet and feeding people, without any accompanying sinful actions is indeed a praiseworthy deed and charity.³⁶ According to [the framework described by] Ibn Ábd al-Salām, it is a recommended innovation, a *mandūb bidāh*.



³² Imām Abū Bakr Aḥmed ibn Ḥusayn ibn Álī al-Bayhaqī [384-458,] famous imām of ḥadīth and Shāfiyī fiqh. Author of voluminous and important works like *Sunan al-Kubra*, *Márifah*, *Shuáb al-Ímān*, *Kitabu'l Asmā'a wa's Sifāt* etc.

³³ According to the jurists of Khorasan, *athar*: is that ḥadīth report from a ṣaḥābī and khabar is reported from RasūlAllāh ﷺ; in other words, **mawqūf** is **athar**, and **marfuū** is **khabar**; though, ḥadīth scholars [do not differentiate and] call all of it as *athar*. Shaykh al-Islām said in *Nukhbah* that both **mawqūf** and **maqtū'ū** are termed *athar*. [*Taqrib/Tadrīb ar-Rāwī*, Categories Six and Seven, p88]

³⁴ *ijmāā*: consensus

³⁵ *Bukhārī* and Bayhaqī in *Sunan al-Kubra*, 2/493. The phrase is: *niyāmat al-bidātu hādhihi*.

³⁶ *iḥsān*

Al-Fākihānī said:

And the second possibility...

This is a valid point in itself, except the reason for ruling it ḥarām is on account of those forbidden acts which he mentioned³⁷ which are unwanted auxiliaries of the gathering. The gathering itself cannot be ruled ḥarām – because it is an expression of joy at the birth of the Messenger ﷺ. Rather if such things occur in, say, a congregation for Friday prayers, they would still be considered ugly and reprehensible. Obviously, it would not necessitate that a congregation for Friday prayer should be deplored because of accompanying acts which are forbidden. I have [myself] seen such things occur on a night of Ramadān after *tarāwiḥ* prayer; but can we forbid people from assembling to offer *tarāwiḥ* prayer just because of accompanying [and unrelated] sinful acts? No, indeed. We will say: the original purpose of the gathering, to offer tarawih prayer is from sunnah and an act that merits reward; but those additional [forbidden] activities are ugly and reprehensible. Similarly, we say: The original component of the Mawlid, is a gathering of people to express joy at the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, which is praiseworthy and mandūb, which merits reward; and those [forbidden] acts that are auxiliary are deplorable and forbidden.



Al-Fākihānī said:

...apart from the fact that [he ﷺ passed away] in the very month he ﷺ was born

Yes, his ﷺ birth is the greatest of favours; and his ﷺ passing is the greatest of sorrows [for the ummah.] The shariāh encourages us to be thankful for favours received, and to be patient, demure and suppress grief during sorrow. Therefore, the Lawmaker commanded us to sacrifice³⁸ an animal upon births; but no such thing is recommended upon deaths or other such sorrowful events. Rather, we were forbidden to wail or ululate. The principles of shariāh encourage us to express joy and jubilation upon his ﷺ blessed birth, not to mourn or be sorrowful upon his ﷺ passing.



³⁷ Such as singing with musical instruments, intermixing of the sexes etc.

³⁸ *āqiqah*

IBN AL-ĤĀJJ ON MAWLID

Imām Abū Ābdullāh ibn al-Ĥājj³⁹ has discussed the issue of Mawlid in *Mad'khal* and his argument is quite sound. In summary, he praises the good aspects such as expressing happiness and gratitude [for the favour] and deplores forbidden actions that may accompany such gatherings. Here below, I reproduce relevant parts⁴⁰ of his opinion on the issue:

ON MAWLID

Among other innovations, is the celebration of Mawlid in the month of Rabi' al-Awwal with the belief that doing so is a form of worship, a noble action and showing reverence to Islamic symbols. This is made up [of a number] of innovations and forbidden acts among which, is use of musical instruments – drums and clarinets – and spending most of the time in ḥarām and bidāh during an auspicious season which Allāh tāālā has blessed and given prominence. Undoubtedly, listening to music⁴¹ is [forbidden anyway] on other nights; then how can it be [permissible] in an auspicious month – a month blessed by Allāh tāālā and in which His honourable Messenger ﷺ was born.

What relation do musical instruments have with showing reverence to this august month in which Allāh tāālā favoured us by sending the Master⁴² of all creation? It is necessary for us to increase our worship and good deeds [in this month] in gratitude to our Lord Almighty for the immense and most precious favour upon us, even though the Prophet ﷺ himself did not do any additional acts of worship in this month. This was because of his ﷺ kindness toward his ﷺ followers and consideration for them – because [it is well known that] he ﷺ would leave certain actions out of concern and mercy for his followers, fearing that such actions may then become obligatory on them.

³⁹ Imām Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ĥājj al-Fāsī [d.737].

⁴⁰ The whole section on Mawlid is 44 pages, see *Mad'khal* 3/2-46. The argument of the author is that singing with musical instruments is ḥarām, intermixing of sexes and other such forbidden acts are deplorable which he condemns at length. Indeed, we agree that anything against the sharīah is deplorable and should be censured, but extraneous acts cannot render it forbidden, as pointed out by Suyūṭī.

⁴¹ *samādā*

⁴² *bi sayyidi'l awwalīna wa'l aākhirīn*

However, he ﷺ indicated the auspiciousness of the glorious month when he ﷺ answered the person who questioned him ﷺ about fasting on Mondays: ***It is the day on which I was born.***⁴³

The propitiousness of that day extends to the month as well in which he ﷺ was born. It is necessary for us to be mindful of the reverence [of this month] as Allāh tāālā has given superiority to this month, because RasūlAllāh ﷺ has said: ***I am the leader of all of Ādām's progeny [and I say this] without pride. Ādām and all others will be under my standard*** [on the day of Judgement].⁴⁴

The superiority of certain seasons or certain places and that Allāh tāālā has specified forms of worship in them, is not because of the season or the place in itself; but rather due to the importance associated with them.⁴⁵ Look at the distinction accorded to this month and for Mondays; don't you see that it is an act of great virtue to fast on this day, because he ﷺ was born on this day? Therefore, when this month arrives, we should honour it, venerate and respect it – following the example of RasūlAllāh ﷺ because, he would designate special days and increase charity and righteous deeds in such days. Do you not recall the saying of Ibn Ābbās ﷺ: ***RasūlAllāh ﷺ was the most generous and charitable among men; and his charity increased in Ramadān.***⁴⁶ So also, we should devote more time in special seasons for doing good and righteous deeds to the best of our ability.

If one objects: "RasūlAllāh ﷺ considered certain seasons as special, and those are well-known; however, he ﷺ did not specify this month as a special season unlike some others."

⁴³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. 8/52. Reported by Abū Qatādah al-Anṣārī that RasūlAllāh ﷺ was asked about fasting on Mondays and he ﷺ said: "It was the day on which I was born and on which I received the [first] revelation." Also reported by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim, Ṭayālī, Ibn Zanjawīyah, Bayhaqī in *Shuáb al-Īmān*.

⁴⁴ Imām Aḥmed in his *Musnad*, Tirmidhī in *Sunan*, Ibn Mājah in his *Sunan*, narrating from Abū Saīd al-Khudrī that RasūlAllāh ﷺ said: "I am the leader of all of Ādām's children on Judgement day; and I do not say this with pride. The Standard of Praise [*Liwā al-Ḥamd*] will be in my hand, and I do not say this with pride. There shall not be any prophet – whether Ādām or others – except under my Standard. I am the first of intercessors and the first whose intercession will be accepted, and I do not say this with pride."

⁴⁵ For example, going to and from between Ṣafā and Marwā is a component of worship not because of the two hills themselves, but because of Sayyidah Hājār's association with them.

⁴⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Tirmidhī*, *Nasāyī*, *Ibn Mājah*, *Dārimī*, *Musnad Imām Aḥmed*.

We answer: that is because of his blessed habit that he ﷺ wished ease for his followers, particularly when it concerns his ﷺ own self. Do you not see that he ﷺ made Madīnah a sanctuary just as Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ﷺ made Makkah a forbidden sanctuary. Yet, he ﷺ did not forbid hunting or cutting down trees in Madīnah in consideration for his ﷺ ummah and as a mercy for them. He ﷺ would look at things from his perspective and even if [such actions were] superior, he would omit them for the sake of his ummah.

The veneration of this month is by doing plenty of good deeds, charity and other things that earn the favour of the Lord Almighty. The least one can do in this blessed month is to abstain from forbidden things – indeed, abstaining from sins is necessary in all months – but one should be more diligent in this blessed month and renounce innovations.

Some people in our times act contrary to this rationale and when this honourable month arrives, they eagerly indulge in games and music, playing tambourines and clarinets.

Alas, were it that they stopped singing! Some of them claim to be mindful of proper etiquette and [therefore,] begin the mawlid with recitation of the Qur’ān. They get someone with a soulful voice and knowledge of vocal techniques to recite. This leads to a number of evils... And they do not stop at that – some add even more evils, such as the singer is a handsome young lad wearing dandy and chic clothes who sings in an enthralling manner causing men and women to incline towards vice...which is the cause of many harms... This⁴⁷ may lead to marital dissatisfaction, finally leading to divorce thereby destroying the fabric of society.

These evils are a consequence of the Mawlid with singing and music – and if the Mawlid is free from it and is only a gathering of friends and a banquet without any sins mentioned above, it still is a bidāh in itself. Because it is adding something in religion which was not done by our pious elders or those who followed the first generation; nor is it reported that any of them intended to celebrate a Mawlid. We are their followers – what was good for them is good enough for us.



⁴⁷ Imām Suyūṭī has omitted a number of lines here as he did not deem it relevant for his discussion; therefore the passage appears incoherent. Ibn al-Ḥājj says that looking at young and handsome boys and describe them in front of their spouses may cause jealousy and suspicion, leading to differences and finally divorce. Ellipses indicate noncontiguity.

EXAMINING IBN AL-ĤĀJJ'S OPINION

The outcome of his article⁴⁸ is that he does not condemn the Mawlid per se, but deplores sinful and forbidden actions that [may] accompany a Mawlid.

The first part is clear that he recommends an increase in worship and good deeds because of the propitiousness of the month, and to do more charity in this month. This is what we mean by Mawlid and which we have commended earlier – because in a Mawlid, there shall only be a recitation of the Qur'ān followed by a banquet and nothing else.

But in his conclusion – he says it is a bidāh – which could either mean that he repudiates his own assertion made in the beginning or he means that it is a praiseworthy bidāh as he has described in the beginning of his article. Or he means that doing so may be a good deed but the intention of Mawlid is an innovation as he has said:

...even the mere intention for Mawlid is an innovation

and

...it has not been reported that any of them has intended to [celebrate] Mawlid

Obviously, he only dislikes the intention of Mawlid, and not the banquet or inviting friends and relatives to the dinner. If one is judicious, one cannot fail to notice that the first part of his article contradicts the conclusion. Because in the first part he encourages people to do more and more good deeds and said that it is a form of gratitude to Allāh tāālā for this blessed month, because the birth of the chief of all messengers ﷺ is in this month. This is what we mean when we say 'intention of Mawlid,' then how does he condemn it in conclusion, after praising it and encouraging it in the beginning? Doing a good deed without any intention, like Ibn al-Ĥājj has mentioned⁴⁹ is inconceivable; and suppose it is possible – then it cannot be considered a form of worship nor will such a deed merit a reward.

⁴⁸ Suyūtī refers to the article in *Mad'khal*, parts of which he has quoted.

⁴⁹ Because he says that doing good deeds in this blessed month is praiseworthy – but the intention of Mawlid is an innovation!

It is because, no action [is valid] without a [proper] intention; and here the intention is to thank Allāh tāālā for His favour – the birth of His honourable Messenger ﷺ in this blessed month. This is the meaning of Mawlid – and it is a beautiful intention without any doubt. Ponder.

Ibn al-Ĥājj also said:

There are some who celebrate the Mawlid not out of reverence [for the advent of the Prophet ﷺ] but to collect money⁵⁰ from people. Such a person was given something during a happy occasion or in a festive season, so he convenes a Mawlid with the intention to bring people together and thus [implicitly] force them to pay. This is one facet of evil – the other is that he resorts to hypocrisy praising them [in greed] and saying things which are not in his heart. Outwardly, he is celebrating the Mawlid with the intention of success in the hereafter, but internally, he seeks to make money. There are some others who convene a Mawlid to collect funds or seeking praise and [thereby seek] their aid, and this too is obviously an evil...

This is similar to his previous discussion – he mentions the evil of ulterior motives; but this has nothing to do with the Mawlid itself.⁵¹



⁵⁰ Lit. *collect silver*

⁵¹ Interestingly, Ibn al-Ĥājj also approved of visiting graves and *tawassul*, he exhorted people to do *istighāthah*. He says in the same *Mad'khal* 1/254-256:

..if the grave is that of a person from whom it is expected to receive barakah on his account, then one should make them intermediaries in his prayer to Allāh tāālā..the tawassul of our Prophet ﷺ is the best....and then make tawassul of dwellers of those graves, I mean, the righteous folk [ṣāliḥīn] to have all wishes fulfilled and sins forgiven for their sakes, by doing duāā to Allāh tāālā near their graves....whosoever has a need should go to them and pray to Allāh through them [*tawassul*] because they are intermediaries between Allāh tāālā and His creation.

Further, he says:

...Ibn Hubayrah in his book: *Ittifāq al-Ayimma* said that Mālik, Shāfiyī, Abū Ḥanifah and Imām Ḥāmid رض – all agreed that it is praiseworthy and recommended to visit the Prophet ﷺ... Ábd al-Ĥāqq in *Tahdhīb al-Tālib* reports from Abū Ímrān al-Fāsī that it is obligatory [wājib] to visit the Prophet ﷺ. Ábd al-Ĥāqq added that he actually meant compulsory sunnah.. whosoever intends to travel only for this purpose [of visiting RasūlAllāh] and nothing else, then he does so as a good deed and the best of good deeds, indeed! Glad tidings and congratulations to such a person – and once again best wishes to him; O Allāh, do not deprive us of this blessing..

IBN ḤAJAR AL-ĀSQALĀNĪ ON MAWLID

Shaykh al-Islām Abu'l Fadl Ibn Ḥajar⁵² was asked about the [permissibility of] Mawlid and he answered:

Celebration of the Mawlid is an innovation – it has not been reported from any of our pious elders⁵³ from the first three centuries. In spite of this, it has both good and bad aspects. When it is celebrated free from all bad aspects and comprising of only good actions, it is a praiseworthy innovation, *bidāh ḥasanah* – otherwise it is not permissible.

I have found a sound basis for this practice – and that is a ḥadīth found in both Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: ***When the Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madīnah, he found the Jews fasting on the tenth of Muḥarram,⁵⁴ so he asked them about it. They replied: "it was the day when the Pharaoh was drowned and Sayyidunā Mūsā عليه السلام was delivered; and we fast on this day in gratitude to Allāh tāālā." RasūlAllāh ﷺ said: 'We have more right upon Mūsā' and he ﷺ fasted on that day.***⁵⁵

We learn from this ḥadīth that [it is commendable to] thank Allāh tāālā on a specific day for favours received or for deliverance from adversity and grief; and to commemorate it every year on its anniversary. Thanking Allāh tāālā can be in various forms – prostration, fasting, charity, recitation of the Qurān etc. Which favour can be greater than the advent of this [honourable] Prophet ﷺ, the prophet of mercy who arrived on this blessed day?

It is necessary to distinguish this day [for offering thanks] similar to the event of Sayyidunā Mūsā عليه السلام and [the fasting on] Āāshūrā'. Those who do not focus on this aspect are not particular about celebrating the Mawlid in any month – like some of them have shifted it to some day of the year. This is the basis of Mawlid.

⁵² Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmed ibn Ḥajar al-Āsqalānī [773-852].

⁵³ *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*

⁵⁴ Āāshūrā'. Most likely the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, because it is the holiday of the 10th even though the event of deliverance from Pharaoh is celebrated in the Passover. Allāh tāālā knows best.

⁵⁵ Bukhārī, Ibn Mājah, Mālik in *Muwaṭṭa*, Imām Aḥmed in *Musnad*.

It is necessary for the Mawlid to be restricted to acts that can be classified as thanking Allāh tāālā as we have mentioned – recitation of the Qur’ān, banquets, charity or recitation of eulogies and odes exhorting towards abnegation in this world which leads to doing more good deeds and increase in charity.

Concerning singing, music and other such things: it is necessary to differentiate between that which is permissible [and that which is not.] If it is a consequence of jubilation on that day, there is no harm in it.⁵⁶ But ḥarām or makrūh things should be prevented, including actions that are not preferable.⁵⁷

Another basis from the ḥadīth has occurred to me,⁵⁸ and this is the ḥadīth reported by Bayhaqī narrating from Anas رض that:

The Prophet ﷺ performed áqīqah⁵⁹ for himself after the proclamation of prophethood⁶⁰

This is apart from the [well-known] fact that his ﷺ grandfather, Ábdu'l Muṭṭalib performed the áqīqah on the seventh day of his ﷺ birth and an áqīqah is not performed twice. Therefore, it can be deduced that the Prophet ﷺ did so as an offering of thanks for the favour of Allāh tāālā upon him ﷺ and that Allāh tāālā sent him ﷺ as a mercy to all the worlds, and bestowed honour upon his ﷺ followers on his ﷺ account. Therefore, it is recommended that we [too] express our gratitude and our joy upon his birth by assembling together, inviting friends and hosting banquets and doing righteous deeds.



⁵⁶ As long as no impermissible actions are done.

⁵⁷ *khilāf al-awlā*: if one can choose among a few options, less preferable options are termed thus.

⁵⁸ Suyūṭī.

⁵⁹ *áqīqah*: to sacrifice an animal as an offering of thanks upon the birth of a child; usually performed by parents or guardians of the newborn.

⁶⁰ Sunan al-Kubrā 9/300. Haythamī in *Majmaá al-Zawāyid*, 4/59, said that it was also reported by Bazzān and Tabarānī in *Mújam al-Awsaṭ* and all the narrators of Tabarānī are *sahīh* narrators except Haytham ibn Jamīl who is *thiqah* and Tabarānī's own shaykh, Ahmed ibn Masúd al-Khayyāt al-Maqdisi who is not mentioned in *Mizān*.

AL-JAZARĪ ON MAWLID

The great ḥadīth master, the grandmaster and authority of Qur’ān recitations and readings, Ḥāfiẓ Shamsuddīn al-Jazārī⁶¹ said in his book *Ārfa’t Tárif bi'l Mawlid al-Sharīf*:

[Someone among his relatives] saw Abū Lahab after his death, in their dream and asked: How are you?

Abū Lahab answered: I am in hellfire, except that I get a reprieve on the night of every Monday – and I suck these two fingers between which there is a trickle of water [and he indicated toward his finger] because I set Thuwaybah⁶² free [by making a sign] with this finger, when she brought the good news of the Prophet’s ﷺ birth and thereafter she suckled him.

When a kāfir like Abū Lahab, who is condemned in the Qur’ān and whose place in hell is guaranteed, gets a reprieve because of being pleased with the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, then what about a monotheist Muslim from the ummah of RasūlAllāh ﷺ, who expresses joy and jubilation, remembering the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, and expends everything possible, in his love for the Prophet ﷺ?

Indeed, such a person deserves a reward and that Allāh tāālā will make him enter paradise by His immense favour [for showing joy on the birth of the Prophet ﷺ].



⁶¹ Imām Shamsuddīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Jazārī al-Shāfiyī [d.833] ḥadīth master and imām of Qur’ān readings; famous for works on recitation, readings and duáā.

⁶² Thuwaybah was Abū Lahab’s slave girl. Ibn Mandah says that she became a Muslim, and some others have differed on this. [*Uṣd al-Ghābah*, 7/47, entry #6798] She suckled the Prophet ﷺ. When the Prophet ﷺ was born, she came to Abū Lahab with the good news – and Abū Lahab set her free, pleased with the birth of a nephew.

IBN NĀŠIRUDDĪN DIMASHQĪ ON MAWLID

Ĥāfiż Shamsuddīn ibn Nāširuddīn al-Dimashqī⁶³ has said in his book, *Al-Mawrid al-Šādī fī Mawlidi'l Hādī*.

It is narrated from authentic narrators⁶⁴ that Abū Lahab gets a reprieve from hellfire on Mondays, because he set Thuwaybah free, in joy and happiness at the birth of RasūlAllāh ﷺ.

He then said the following in verse:

If this is about a kafir, who is deplored [in the Qur'ān] -
"Destroyed be his both hands"⁶⁵ and whose abode is eternal hell
It has been reported that he gets a reprieve every Monday
His torment subsides on account of his happiness for Āhmed ﷺ
Then, can you imagine the reward of that slave of Allāh,
Who rejoices in Āhmed ﷺ all his life, and dies a [staunch] monotheist?
[will he not receive any reward or reprieve?]



⁶³ Ĥāfiż Muhammād ibn Abū Bakr ibn Ábdullāh al-Shāfiyī al-Dimashqī, known as Ibn Nāširuddīn al-Dimashqī [777-842] is a famous ḥadīth imām and an ardent admirer of Ibn Taymiyyah. He is the author of a polemic work: *Radd al-Wāfir* defending Ibn Taymiyyah and repudiating those who anathematised Ibn Taymiyyah.

⁶⁴ This is the [mursal] part of the ḥadīth in *Bukhārī*, #5101, *Kitābu'n Nikāh*: explaining the verse, "**those who suckle you are your mothers**" (Sūrah an-Nisā'a, 4:23) Bukhārī narrates from Ḥakam ibn Nāfiy from Shuāyb from Zuhri who narrates from Úrwah ibn Zubayr, narrating from Zaynab bint Salamah who narrates from Umm Ḥabibah bint Abū Sufyān (the blessed mother of believers). The last part of the ḥadīth is:

Úrwah said: Thuwaybah was Abū Lahab's slave-girl and he set her free. She suckled the Prophet ﷺ. After Abū Lahab died someone in his family saw him (in a dream) in a miserable condition, and asked him: "What happened to you?" Abū Lahab replied: "I did not find after you any [succor] except that I am given drink because of this [showing the hollow between his thumb and forefinger] because I set free Thuwaybah thus."

According to Suhaylī, it was Sayyidunā Abbās ﷺ who saw that dream [*Fat'h al-Bārī*, 11/381].

⁶⁵ Sūrah Lahab, 111/1. تَبَتْ يَدَا أَيْ لَهَبٍ وَّتَبَّ.

KAMĀL AL-UDFŪWĪ ON MAWLID

Kamāl al-Udfuwī⁶⁶ has said in his book *Al-Ṭāliy al-Sayīd*:

Our just companion Nāṣiruddin Maḥmūd ibn al-Ímād told us that Abū Ṭayyib Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Subti al-Mālikī, who stayed in Qaws was a practising scholar.

On the day on which the Prophet ﷺ was born, he would dismiss the class and tell us: O jurist! It is a day of rejoicing and joy today, give the children a holiday.

This is clear proof that he permitted Mawlid and did not criticise it, and he was a well-known jurist, a Mālikī imam,⁶⁷ a versatile scholar and a pious man. Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalūsī and others are among his students. He passed away in 695 AH.



⁶⁶ Kamāluddīn Jaāfar ibn Thálab ibn Jaāfar al-Udfuwī [685-748].

⁶⁷ Both Fākihānī and Ibn al-Ḥājj were Malikis, hence the mention.

MONDAY AND RABIÝ AL-AWWAL

Ibn al-Ĥājj said:

If one asks: What is the wisdom in Rabiý al-Awwal being the month in which the Prophet ﷺ was born and not in Ramadān, the month in which the Qur'añ was revealed or Laylatu'l Qadr; or in any of other honourable months, or the 15th night of Shábān, or the day or night of a Friday.

We say, there are four reasons for this.

1. In the ḥadīth it is mentioned that plants and vegetation were created on Monday; this is an important day because the sustenance of humans – food and fruits – were created on this day.
2. The word *rabiý*⁶⁸ is an indication of the blessing in this month; and as Abū Ábd ar-Rahmān al-Šaqqālī said, everybody has a share of their name.⁶⁹
3. *Rabiý* – or Spring – is a moderate season and the most beautiful; his shariáh is also the most moderate and the most benevolent.
4. It was the Will of the Almighty, the Wise to bless the season in which he was born. Because if he was born in an august time, some people would say that he was blessed because of the season.



Here endeth the book; Praised be Allāh tāálā, Sustainer of the Worlds.

⁶⁸ *rabiý* means

⁶⁹ That is Rabiý means blessed, and because the Messenger ﷺ was born in this month, it has indeed become a blessed month.

Appendix A

HAĐĪTH IMĀMS WHO COMMENDED MAWLID

People who have neither read ḥadīth nor are capable of reading Arabic text, nor able to describe basic ḥadīth terminology act as if they are more knowledgeable than Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar himself. “Bidāh” they growl, and in a supremely self-righteous manner deride celebration of Mawlid. Some others with superficial knowledge make elaborate websites screaming: ‘bidāh, bidāh.’ We ask such people to do a little introspection and answer the following with Allāh as their witness:

1. How many books of ḥadīth from cover to cover have you read?
2. How proficient are you in ḥadīth terminology/sciences and how many books on *uṣūl* have you read?
3. How many years have you spent reading and teaching ḥadīth?
4. How many ḥadīth have you memorised, both sanad and matn?
5. How many books on ḥadīth have you written – either as compilations or commentaries?
6. Are you capable of explaining Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī from anywhere without referring to *Fatḥ al-Bārī* or other commentaries?⁷⁰
7. Are you able to mention appropriate ḥadīth for any ruling without looking up indexes and explanatory notes?

If you fall short, is it prudent to reject imams of ḥadīth who spent their whole lives serving the ḥadīth sciences for the opinion of novices? Even if you claim that you are following ḥadīth scholars of later age (like Wahābī/Salafī academics of our time) is it not foolish to claim that they understand the sunnah better than these imāms? Or that people in the 14th century are more pious and mindful of adherence to sunnah, than ḥadīth imams of the 7th and 8th century!

⁷⁰ Because the authors of all these commentaries are followers of a madh'hab; it would be improper for a person capable of deriving rulings directly from Qur'ān and ḥadīth to cite opinions of muqallids!

1. Ḥāfiẓ Ábd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ismāyīl Abū Shāmah [599-665]

<i>Madh'hab</i>	Shāfiyī – Ashārī
<i>Period</i>	769 years ago
<i>Learning/Teaching</i>	Approximately 56 years [passed away aged 66]
<i>Achievements</i>	Memorised Qur'ān around age 10; studied under Ḥāfiẓ Álamuddīn al-Sakhawī (student of Imām Shātibī,) Ízzuddīn Ibn Ábd al-Salām and Muwaffaquddīn Ibn Qudāmah; headed the Dār al-Ḥadīth of Ashrafiyyah in Damascus.
<i>Prominent Students</i>	Imām Nawawī
<i>Notable Works</i>	<i>Kitāb ar-Rawḍatayn</i> , <i>Dhayl al-Rawḍatayn</i> , <i>Murshid al-Wajīz</i> , <i>Tārīkh Dimashq Kabīr</i> (15 vols), <i>Tārīkh Dimashq Sagīr</i> (5 vols), <i>Ibrāz al-Māānī</i> , <i>Mufradāt al-Qurrā'a</i> , <i>Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Ibn Ásākīr</i> (5 vols), <i>Al-Bāyīth ǵalā Inkār al-Bidāyī wa'l Ḥawādīth</i> .
<i>Opinion on Mawlid</i>	"Among the beautiful innovations of our times is that which is done in Arbil – may Allāh tāālā strengthen it – every year on the anniversary of the day of the Prophet's ﷺ birth [Mawlidī'n Nabīy] when they spend in charity and good deeds. They exhibit decorations and express happiness and generously give to the poor folk.
	All of this is done in the love, reverence and esteem of the Prophet ﷺ established in the heart of those who commemorate the Mawlid, and they thank Allāh tāālā for the favour of sending His Messenger ﷺ – the mercy for the universe and for all other prophets. The person who first started this practice was Shaykh Úmar ibn Muḥammad who was a righteous man and well known for his piety. The ruler of Arbil and others followed his example." [Bāyīth]

2. Ḥāfiẓ Ímāduddīn Abu'l Fidā'a Ismāyīl Ibn Kathīr [701-774]

Madh'hab

Shāfiyī – Ashārī

Period

660 years ago

Learning/Teaching

Approximately 60 years [passed away aged 73]

Achievements

Memorised Qur'ān at a young age and a number of texts including *Tanbīh*. His teachers include Ibn Shāhnah, Ibn Āsākir, Ibn al-Shīrāzī, Al-Āmīdī, Ḥāfiẓ Al-Mizzī (whose daughter Ibn Kathīr married), Dabbūsī, Ibn Taymiyyah and Dhahabī. He was a great admirer of Ibn Taymiyyah. He was the chief shaykh at Dār al-Ḥadīth, Ashrafiyyah, Damascus.

Prominent Students

Imām Jazarī, Ḥāfiẓ al-Írāqī

Notable Works

Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāyah wa'n Nihāyah* (21 vols), *Bāyith al-Hathīth*, *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'a*, *Shamāyil ar-Rasūl*, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiyīyyah*, *Takmīl Jāmiy al-Masānīd wa's Sunan* (37 vols) in which he attempted to consolidate all known ḥadīth arranged in the alphabetic order of companions, which he estimated to reach 100,000 ḥadīth; he had compiled 80,000 at the time of his death, and completed by his grandson.

Opinion on Mawlid

He wrote favourably about Muzaffaruddīn Kūkūbūrī and that he initiated the practice of Mawlid; he mentioned details of Mawlids held in that period without a word of criticism. Indeed, he wrote admiringly: "Shaykh Abu'l Ḫaṭṭāb ibn Dīyah wrote a book on Mawlid of the Prophet ﷺ named *At-Tanwīr fi Mawlidī'l Bashīr an-Nadīhīr* upon which he was given a present of a thousand gold coins". He also wrote a book on Mawlid which is known as *Mawlid an-Nabiy*.

3. Ḥāfiẓ Zaynuddīn Abu'l Fadl Ábd ar-Rahīm al-Írāqī [725-806]

Madh'hab

Shāfiyī – Ashārī

Period

628 years ago

Learning/Teaching

Approximately 73 years [passed away aged 81]

Achievements

Memorised Qur'ān around age 8; studied under Taqiyuddīn Abu'l Ḥasan al-Subki and Ibn Daqīq al-Īd; travelled to many places obtaining authorisations with an elevated chain.

Ibn Ḥajar said: "We have not seen anyone as proficient as him in ḥadīth." Suyūṭī considered him the Mujaddid of the the 8th century along with Bulqīnī. Ibn Ḥajar also said that almost everyone in his time took ḥadīth from him; Ibn Ḥajar himself studied with Al-Írāqī for ten years. He was the Qādī of Madīnah for three years.

Prominent Students

Imām Ibn Ḥajar al-Āsqalānī, Nūruddīn al-Haythamī

Notable Works

Takhrij of ḥadīth in *Iḥyā'a*, *Minhāj* of Baydāwī, *Arbāyīn* of Nawawī; *Takmilah Sharh al-Muhadh'hab*, *Dhayl Mīzaān al-Īytiḍāl*, *Tarh al-Tathrīb*, *Alfiyah* on ḥadīth terminology and its commentaries, *Fat'h al-Mughīth* and *Sharh al-Kabīr*, *At-Taqyīd al-Yidāh*, *Mughnī ʻan Ḥaml al-Asfār*, *Akhbār al-Āḥyā'a bi Akhbār al-Īḥyā'a*, *Al-Kashf al-Mubīn*, *Taqrīb al-Masānīd*

Opinion on Mawlid

Wrote a book on Mawlid, ***Al-Mawrid al-Hanīy fī Mawlidī's Sanīy***.

4. Ḥāfiẓ Shamsuddīn Muḥammad Abū'l Khayr ibn al-Jazārī [751-833]

<i>Madh'hab</i>	Shāfiyī – Ashārī
<i>Period</i>	601 years ago
<i>Learning/Teaching</i>	Approximately 69 years [passed away aged 82]
<i>Achievements</i>	Memorised the Qur'ān at 13; and studied under many ḥadīth scholars; Ibn Kathīr, Ḥiyāuddīn and Bulqīnī gave him authorisations. He is the highest authority on Qur'ān recitations and readings from his time onward.
<i>Notable Works</i>	<i>Muqaddimah, An-Nashr fi'l Qirā'āt al-Āshr, Tayyibatu'n Nashr, Durratu'l Mudiyyah, Ghāyatū'l Maharah, Hidayah ilā Ulūm al-Riwayah, Dhātu'sh Shifā, Taqrīb al-Nashr, Taħbīr al-Taysīr, Nihāyatū'd Dirāyat, Tamħid, Munjid al-Muqriyīn, Ḥiṣn al-Ḥaṣīn.</i>
<i>Opinion on Mawlid</i>	He has written two books on Mawlid: <i>Al-Tárif bi'l Mawlid al-Sharīf</i> and <i>Ārf al-Tárif bi'l Mawlid al-Sharīf</i> .
	"When a kāfir like Abū Lahab, who is condemned in the Qur'ān and who is guaranteed a place in hell, can get a reprieve because of being pleased with the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, then what about a monotheist Muslim in the ummah of RasūlAllāh ﷺ, who expresses joy and jubilation in remembrance of the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, and expends everything possible in his love for the Prophet ﷺ?"
	Indeed, such a person deserves a reward and that Allāh tāālā will make him enter paradise by His immense favour [for expressing joy upon the birth of the Prophet ﷺ]."

5. Shaykh al-Islām Abu'l Faḍl Aḥmed ibn Ḥajar al-Āsqalānī [773-852]

<i>Madh'hab</i>	Shāfi'iyyī – Ashārī
<i>Period</i>	582 years ago
<i>Learning/Teaching</i>	Approximately 69 years [passed away aged 79]
<i>Achievements</i>	Memorised the Qur'ān at a young age; and studied under many ḥadīth scholars, Ḥāfiẓ al-Írāqī being the most prominent. He is universally acknowledged as <i>Amīr al-Mu'minīn fī'l ḥadīth</i> .
<i>Notable Works</i>	<i>Fat'h al-Bārī</i> (17 vols), <i>Taghlīq al-Tálīq</i> (5 vols), <i>Tahdhību't Tahdhīb</i> (12 vols), <i>It'hāf al-Maharāh</i> (19 vols, 25,500 hadith), <i>Al-Isābah</i> (9 vols), <i>Al-Maṭālib al-Āliyyah</i> (19 vols), <i>Lisān al-Mīzān</i> (10 vols), <i>Durar al-Kāminah</i> , <i>Nukhbatu'l Fikar</i> , <i>Nukat álā Kitāb ibn Ṣalāh</i> , <i>Talkhīṣ al-Ḥabīr</i> (4 vols), <i>Iṭrāf al-Musnid al-Mútalīy</i> (10 vols) are among his most famous works. Sakhāwī said that if he did not write any other book, he would still be remembered for his <i>Fat'h al-Bārī</i> alone.
<i>Opinion on Mawlid</i>	"Celebration of the Mawlid is an innovation – it has not been reported from any of our pious elders from the first three centuries. In spite of this, it has both good and bad aspects. When it is celebrated free from all bad aspects and comprising of only good actions, it is a praiseworthy innovation, <i>bidāh ḥasanah</i> – otherwise it is not permissible. Thanking Allāh tā'ālā can be in various forms – prostration, fasting, charity, recitation of the Qur'ān etc. Which favour can be greater than the advent of this [honourable] Prophet ﷺ, the prophet of mercy who arrived on this blessed day?"

6. Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Abū Bakr ibn Nāṣiruddīn al-Dimashqī [777-842]

Madh'hab

Shāfiyī

Period

592 years ago

Learning/Teaching

Approximately 55 years [passed away aged 65]

Achievements

Memorised the Qur'ān at a young age and studied under many ḥadīth scholars. Ibn Ḥajar praised him and Sakhawī said: "Nobody from the Levant after him, ever reached his grade".

Notable Works

It'hāfu's Salik bi Ruwwātī'l Muwaṭṭa' ʻan Mālik, It'hāf, Ahādīth al-Sittah, Asānīd al-Kutub al-Sittah, Al-Īlām bimā waqā fī Mushtabih al-Dhahabi mina'l Awhām, Iftitāh al-Qārī li Ṣahīh al-Bukhārī, Bardu'l Akbād, Badī'atū'l Bayān, Imlā'a al-Anfas, Bawāyīth al-Fikrah, Tarjīh li ḥadīth Ṣalāt al-Tasbīh, Radd al-Wāfir, Ra'fa al-Malām, Úqūd al-Durar fī Úlūm al-Athar,

Opinion on Mawlid

He has written three books on Mawlid: *Al-Mawrid al-Sādī fī Mawlid al-Hādī, Jāmiy al-Aāthār fī Mawlid al-Mukhtār, Al-Lafż ar-Rāyiq fī Mawlidi Khayr al-Khalāyiq*.

"It is narrated from authentic narrators that Abū Lahab gets a reprieve from hellfire on Mondays, because he set free Thuwaybah, in joy and happiness at the birth of RasūlAllāh ﷺ."

He wrote verses which essentially mean: if a kāfir who is deplored in the Qur'ān gets reprieve from torment for the reason that he was happy at the Prophet's ﷺ birth, a Muslim who believes in tawhīd will certainly not be deprived when he celebrates the birth of the Prophet ﷺ".

7. Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad ibn Ábd ar-Raḥmān al-Sakhawī [831-902]

Madh'hab

Shāfiyī – Ashārī

Period

532 years ago

Learning/Teaching

Approximately 61 years [passed away aged 71]

Achievements

Memorised the Qur'ān, *Úmdatū'l Aḥkām*, *Minhāj* and *Alfiyatu ibn Mālik* and many other books before the age of twenty. The scholars with whom he studied and took ḥadīth are close to four hundred, and Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-Ásqalānī and Bulqīnī are the most prominent among them. Ibn Ḥajar himself praised him saying: "He is my most diligent student". He has narrated the ḥadīth awwaliyah from 120 shaykhs and so also authorisations of Bukhārī from 120 shaykhs.

Notable Works

He mentioned 150 works in the autobiographical note in his own *Ḍaw al-Lāmiy*; Al-Kittānī says in *Fahras al-Fahāris* that his books put together are well over 400 volumes.

The following are most famous: *Maqāṣid al-Ḥasanah*, various *Arbayīn*, *Aqrabu'l Wasāyil*, *Fat'h al-Mughīth*, *Tuḥfatū'l Munīfah* fī Aḥādīthi Abī Ḥanīfah, *Takmilah Sharḥ al-Tirmidhī li'l Írāqī*, *Jāmiy al-Ummahāt wa'l Masānīd* which he did not complete and if it were complete, it would reach 100 volumes, *Miātu ḥadīth án Miātu Shaykh*.

Opinion on Mawlid

He has written a book on Mawlid named *Al-Fakhr al-Álawī fī'l Mawlid an-Nabawī* and he has advised to recite reliable books written by ḥadīth imams such as Ḥāfiẓ al-Írāqī's *Mawrid al-Haniy* during Mawlid celebrations.

8. Ḥāfiẓ Jalāluddīn Ábd ar-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī [849-911]

<i>Madh'hab</i>	Shāfiyyī/Mālikī – Ashārī
<i>Period</i>	523 years ago
<i>Learning/Teaching</i>	Approximately 53 years [passed away aged 62]
<i>Achievements</i>	Memorised the Qur'ān in his 9 th year as well as <i>Minhāj</i> , <i>Alfiyatu Ibn Mālik</i> and <i>Úmdah</i> before coming of age. Khātimatu'l Ḥuffāz, the greatest ḥadīth scholar from his time onward, he has himself said that he had memorised 200,000 ḥadīth. He narrates from 600 shaykhs. He was a master of many disciplines and wrote books in almost all Islamic subjects.
<i>Notable Works</i>	He mentioned more than 250 works in the autobiographical note in his historical work <i>Ḩusn al-Muḥāḍarah</i> . Other well-known works are <i>Tafsīr Jalālayn</i> , <i>Tafsīr Durr al-Manthūr</i> , <i>Jam' al-Jawāmiy</i> (consolidation of 100 books and 50,000 ḥadīth,) <i>Itqān</i> , <i>Tadrib ar-Rāwī</i> , <i>Khaṣayiṣ al-Kubrā</i> , etc.
<i>Opinion on Mawlid</i>	He has written a book on the validity of the Mawlid named <i>Ḩusn al-Maqṣid fī Āmal al-Mawlid</i> and was a vocal supporter of Mawlid. “Mawlid is essentially, a gathering of people in which there is recitation of the Qur'ān, narration of events surrounding the birth [and proclamation] of the Prophet ﷺ and [miraculous] signs that appeared during his blessed birth. A banquet is held and the assembly disperses thereafter without doing anything further. This is a praiseworthy innovation and the person doing it will be rewarded, because of the reverence of the Prophet ﷺ and expression of happiness and gratulation upon the blessed birth of the Messenger ﷺ”.

9. Ḥāfiẓ Shihābuddīn Aḥmed ibn Muḥammad al-Qaṣṭallānī [851-923]

<i>Madh'hab</i>	Shāfiyyī – Ashārī
<i>Period</i>	511 years ago
<i>Learning/Teaching</i>	Approximately 60 years [passed away aged 72]
<i>Achievements</i>	Memorised the Qur'ān and many texts such as <i>Shāṭibiyah</i> , <i>Jazariyyah</i> , <i>Wardiyah</i> etc., at a young age and learnt all the seven recitations; he read the whole of <i>Bukhārī</i> in five sittings under Shāwī. His teachers include Shaykh Khālid al-Az'harī, Ajlūnī and Imām Sakhawī. His annotations on <i>Shāṭibiyah</i> have insights and annotations that are not found even in Jazari's commentaries.
<i>Notable Works</i>	He has written a number of works on ḥadīth and sīrah: <i>Irshād al-Sārī</i> (10 vols) a commentary on <i>Bukhārī</i> , which in Kattānī's opinion is a better than <i>Fat'h al-Bārī</i> or others as a text in teaching. <i>Minhāju'l Ibtihāj</i> commentary on Muslim (in eight volumes and left incomplete at the time of his death), <i>Sharḥ al-Shamāyīl</i> , <i>Isāād</i> , <i>Fat'h al-Dānī</i> , <i>Laṭāyif al-Ishārāt</i> , <i>Mawāhib al-Ladunniyyah</i> .
<i>Opinion on Mawlid</i>	"If Friday is considered special because of the birth of Sayyidunā Ādam ﷺ such that Muslims are exhorted to seek blessings on this day; then why not the day on which the leader of all prophets ﷺ was born?"
	"[After mentioning Jazari's opinion on Mawlid] Muslims have been celebrating in the month of his ﷺ blessed birth ever since [this practice was innovated] and hold banquets, give in charity in the nights of Rabīy and express joy and jubilation and increase good deeds; they recite the Mawlid and recount the blessings Allāh tāālā gives us for the sake of His Messenger ﷺ".

10. Ḥāfiẓ Shihābuddīn Aḥmed ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī [899-974]

<i>Madh'hab</i>	Shāfiyī – Ashārī
<i>Period</i>	460 years ago
<i>Learning/Teaching</i>	Approximately 65 years [passed away aged 75]
<i>Achievements</i>	Memorised the Qur'ān when he was very young and entered Al-Az'har at 24. His teachers include Shaykh al-Islām Qādī Zakariyyah, Sanbātī, Shams al-Mash'hadī, Samhūdī, Ṭablāwī, Shihabuddīn Ramlī, Abu'l Ḥasan Bakrī. He is considered as an authority in the Shāfiyī madh'hab.
<i>Notable Works</i>	He has written a number of works on ḥadīth and fiqh: <i>Sharḥ al-Mishkāt</i> , <i>Tuhafatu'l Muḥtāj bi Sharḥ al-Minhāj</i> , two commentaries on <i>Irshād</i> , <i>Šawāyiq al-Muhrīqah</i> , <i>Sharḥ al-Arbāyīn</i> , <i>Al-Zawājir ʻan Iqtirāf al-Kabāyir</i> , <i>Al-Īlām li Qawātiy al-Islām</i> , <i>Fatāwā al-Kubrā</i> and <i>Fatāwā al-Ḥadīthiyyah</i> .
<i>Opinion on Mawlid</i>	He has written a book on Mawlid named <i>Itmāmu'n Ni ymati álā al-Āālam fi Mawlidī Sayyidi Waladi Ādām</i> , and Imām Ibrāhīm Bayjūrī has written a commentary on this work. A manuscript of another commentary <i>Bahjatu'l Fikar álā Mawlid al-Imām Ibn Ḥajar</i> by Shaykh Maḥallī can be found online on the King Saud University portal.
	"As for Mawlid celebrations and litanies that are held in our lands are mostly good deeds like charity, dhikr, prayers and salutations upon RasūlAllāh ﷺ and reciting eulogies in his ﷺ praise. Concerning evil things like intermingling of men and women – then it remains ḥarām even if it is done outside a Mawlid." [Fatāwā Ḥadīthiyyah]

11. Nūruddīn Mullā Álī ibn Sulṭān al-Qārī [d.1014]

Madh'hab

Ḥanafī – Māturīdī

Period

420 years ago

Learning/Teaching

At least 62 years [Year of birth not known, but after initial education he entered Makkah around 952 and stayed there forever.]

Achievements

Memorised the Qur'ān at an early age and mastered Qur'ān recitations. His teachers include Imām Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, Imām Álī al-Muttaqī al-Hindī.

Notable Works

Sharḥ Fiqh al-Akbar, *Ḍaw al-Māālī*, *Takhrīj Aḥādīth al-Āqāyīd an-Nasafīyyah*, *Tāliqāt al-Qārī álā Thulāthiyāt al-Bukhārī*, *Jamālayn álā Jalalayn*, *Jam' al-Wasāyil fī Sharḥ al-Shamāyil*, *Ḥirż al-Thamīn álā Ḥiṣn al-Ḥaṣīn*, *Sharḥ Nukhbatu'l Fikar*, *Sharḥ Shifā*, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sharḥ Musnad Imām Abī Ḥanīfah*, *Sharḥ al-Hidāyah of Marghīnānī*, *Sharḥ al-Wiqāyah*, *Fat'ḥ Bāb al-Ínāyah Sharḥ Nuqāyah*, *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ bi Sharḥi Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, *Al-Maṣnū' fī Mārifati'l Mawdū'ū*, *Mināḥ al-Fikriyyah*, and a number of monographs.

Opinion on Mawlid

He has written a book on Mawlid, *Al-Mawlid ar-Rawī fi'l Mawlid an-Nabawī*.

12. Shaykh Ábd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Bukhārī Dihlawī [958 -1052]

<i>Madh'hab</i>	Ḥanafī – Māturīdī
<i>Period</i>	382 years ago
<i>Learning/Teaching</i>	Approximately 80 years [passed away aged 94]
<i>Achievements</i>	He was instructed by his father from the age of four and he completed his studies by the time he was fourteen. He then memorised the Qur'ān and spent eight years learning from the scholars of Transoxiana. He visited Hijaz in 996 and took ḥadīth from scholars and upon his return to India revived the interest in ḥadīth sciences.
<i>Notable Works</i>	<i>Lamāāt al-Tanqīh</i> , Arabic commentary on <i>Mishkat</i> , <i>Ashiātu'l Lamāāt</i> , a Persian commentary on <i>Mishkāt</i> , <i>Madāriju'n Nubuwwah</i> , <i>Sharī' Sifru's Sāādah</i> , <i>Akhbār al-Akhyār</i> , <i>Jadhb al-Qulūb</i> , <i>Jāmiy al-Barakāt</i> , <i>Maraj al-Bahrayn</i> , <i>Zubdatu'l Aāthār</i> , <i>Zād al-Muttaqīn</i> , <i>Fat'h al-Mannān fī Manāqib an-Nūmān</i> , <i>Taħṣil al-Táarruf fī Márifati'l Fiqhi wa't Taṣawwuf</i> , <i>Sharī' Futūh al-Ghayb</i> , <i>Takmīl al-Īmān</i> , <i>Mā Thabata bi's Sunnah</i> .
<i>Opinion on Mawlid</i>	<p>“[Quoting Al-Jazarī] By my life! His reward will be that Allāh tāālā will bestow His favours upon him and make him enter paradise. Musims have been celebrating the Mawlid in the month of his ﷺ birth – they hold banquets, give in charity and celebrate and do good deeds, and recite the Mawlid...</p> <p>“...it has been observed that the special favour upon celebrating Mawlid it results in safety and peace for the remaining part of the year.</p> <p>“...may Allāh tāālā have mercy on that soul who spends the night of the blessed Mawlid in jubilation and joy, celebrating this as Eid...”</p>

Appendix B

BIDÁH

*Translation of the complete topic in *Qawāyid al-Kubrā* of Ibn Ábd as-Salām*

Bidáh: Praxes not in vogue in the time of RasūlAllāh ﷺ.

It is classified as following:

1. Bidáh Wājib⁷¹ – Obligatory
2. Bidáh Ḥarām – Forbidden
3. Bidáh Mandūb – Recommended, Praiseworthy
4. Bidáh Makrūh – Disliked
5. Bidáh Mubāh – Permissible

The method to ascertain the category to which a bidáh belongs is to evaluate it against principles of sharīah. If it corresponds to the principles of wājib, it is wājib; and likewise ḥarām, mandūb, makrūh or mubāh according to respective conditions.

Examples of Obligatory Bidáh:

- Arabic Grammar: it is obligatory⁷² to teach and learn [Arabic] grammar to be able to understand the Book of Allāh and the tradition of His Messenger ﷺ. This is obligatory because, it is obligatory to preserve the sharīah; and it is not possible to protect it unless we understand it well. That which is required to fulfil an obligation is also obligatory.
- Conservation of language of the Book and Sunnah.⁷³

⁷¹ In Arabic, it is *wājibah*, etc. due to agreement with gender, which is ignored here.

⁷² Obligatory for a group of scholars.

⁷³ *hifż al-gharīb*: preserving meanings of antiquated words. For example dictionaries like *Mishkātu'l Anwar* of Qādī Iyād, *Nihāyah* of Ibn al-Athīr, *Tuhfatu'l Arib* of Abū Ḥayyān and *Tahdhīb al-Asma'a wa'l Lughāt* of Nawawī.

- Establishing⁷⁴ the discipline of principles of fiqh [*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*]
- Criticism of narrators,⁷⁵ so as to differentiate between authenticated and weak reports.

The principles of sharīah mandate its preservation as a collective obligation,⁷⁶ and it is impossible to preserve except by adopting the aforementioned innovations.

Forbidden Bidáh:

- The Qadarīyyah⁷⁷ sect – deniers of destiny
- The Jabarīyyah sect – deniers of free will
- The Murjiyyah sect – who deny punishment in the hereafter
- The Mujassimah sect – anthropomorphists

It must be noted that refuting these sects is an obligatory bidáh.⁷⁸

Recommended Bidáh:

- Establishing schools, cloisters; building bridges and alcoves.⁷⁹
- Every good thing or charity which was not established among the first generation of Muslims.

⁷⁴ Which is an innovation and not formalised in the time of the Companions or their followers.

⁷⁵ *jarḥ* - *tádil*

⁷⁶ *fard kifāyah*: It is collectively obligatory such that if a group of people are engaged in it, the community is absolved; and if nobody engages in it, every individual is culpable and bears the sin of not fulfilling the obligation.

⁷⁷ Not to be confused with Qadarīyyah, due to proximity in transliteration; Qādirīs are the followers of Shaykh Ábd al-Qādir al-Jilānī – a sufi school within Ahl as-Sunnah. Qadarī is a sect that denies Divine preordination or *taqdir*.

⁷⁸ That is, none of the Ṣahābah and Tābiyīs refuted anthropomorphists as they did not exist in their time; and since they appeared later, it is obligatory on us to refute them, like the Wahābīs, Salafīs and their offshoots – may Allāh tāālā destroy their mischief.

⁷⁹ *qanāṭir*

- *Tarāwiḥ*: Supererogatory prayers in Ramadān.
- Expounding finer points of taṣawwuf; theological discourse and refutation.
- Gatherings to discuss and elucidate proofs for religious issues, as long as such conferences are for the sake of Allāh tāālā.

Disliked Bidāh

- Decorating and adorning mosques
- Embellishing copies of the Qur'ān
- [According to an opinion,] reciting Qur'ān in a melodious voice and tempo such that it violates the structure of Arabic words; but the accurate position is that it is forbidden [when the variation of the tone adds or elides a letter, thereby distorting the meaning].

Permissible Bidāh

- Shaking hands after morning and evening prayers.⁸⁰
- Preparing and eating luxurious and delicious food and drink; wearing expensive and fine clothes; living in spacious and comfortable dwellings; wearing newer forms of Muslim headgear⁸¹ and other accessories.⁸²

There may be a difference of opinion in some of these issues – where a group of scholars consider it a disliked innovation [*bidāh makrūhah*], others may consider it as an actionable sunnah present in the time of RasūlAllāh ﷺ or thereafter similar to recitation of *istiāādhah* and *basmalah*⁸³ in the prayer. Allāh tāālā knows best.



⁸⁰ *ṣubh* - ḍāṣr

⁸¹ *tayālisah*: is a form of cap which was not present in the first generation and is a foreign import.

⁸² *akmām*: cuff links.

⁸³ *istiāādhah*: aūūdhu billāhi mina'sh shayṭāni'r rajīm; *basmalah*: bismillāhi'r rafīmani'r rafīm.

Appendix C

QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO QUESTION MAWLID

They are ordinary people: incapable of reciting Sūrah Fatiḥah properly, illiterate labourers, men who shave their beards and women who do not cover themselves, people who do not pray regularly, young men who wear tight fitting jeans in prayer exposing their áwrah; and people who watch movies and listen to music, but yet dismiss Mawlid scornfully: “Did the companions celebrate it? Is it proven by any Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth?” Even if such a questioner were a ḥadīth scholar with a navel-length beard, we ask them:

1. How many of you and your teachers or any scholar in the previous two hundred years can claim ḥadīth scholarship at the level of:
 - a. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr [d.774]
 - b. Ibn al-Jazariyy [d.833]
 - c. Ḥāfiẓ Zaynuddīn al-Írāqī [d.806]
 - d. Ibn Ḥajar al-Ásqalānī [d.852]
 - e. Ibn Nāṣiruddīn al-Dimashqī [d.842]
 - f. Jalāluddīn Suyūṭī [d.911]
 - g. Ḥāfiẓ Qaṣṭallānī [d.923]
 - h. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī [d.974]
 - i. Mullā Álī al-Qārī [d.1014]
 - j. Shāh Ábd al-Ḥaqq Dihlawī [d.1052]
2. How many of you or your teachers have memorised Bukhārī and Muslim – complete ḥadīth including the text and narrators?
3. How many of you have read the books Bukhārī or Muslim in full or have an authorisation shorter than any of these scholars?
4. Give four reasons why we should follow you or your teachers instead of the aforementioned imāms?
5. Until the last century (1300 AH,) what is the ratio of scholars who have supported and praised Mawlid to those who have categorically rejected and condemned celebrating the Mawlid?

6. If Mawlid is a bidáh, then why do you not condemn the aforementioned scholars as innovators?
7. If celebrating Mawlid is a bidáh, do you accuse these scholars of:
 - a. being ignorant of ḥadīth or its meaning
 - b. being ignorant of principles of fiqh – and bidáh itself
 - c. being heedless of sunnah
 - d. actively promoting bidáh
 - e. being unconcerned about the state of the ummah?
8. If not, why do you revile those who celebrate Mawlid in our times and spare these scholars?
9. Mawlid was being celebrated in Ibn Taymiyyah's time and he mentions it in *Iqtidā'a*; why did he not write a detailed refutation of this practice and condemn it? Instead, he wrote:

Commemorating mawlid and considering it a [joyous] season: which some people celebrate; there shall be a great reward for the beautiful intention [of celebrating mawlid] and for the reverence of the Prophet ﷺ as I have previously mentioned – where some people consider it praiseworthy, a strict believer may consider it ugly. Someone complained to Imām Aḥmed about a rich man who spent about a thousand dīnār on a copy of the Qur'ān and he replied: "Leave him. He has put his gold to good use." Even though he considered decoration of *muṣ-ḥaf*⁸⁴ as makrūh. Some [Ḥanbali] scholars have tried to reconcile with his opinion and said: "the rich man was only renewing the paper and writing." But this was not [Imām] Aḥmed's intention, rather what he meant was: this action is done for a reason⁸⁵ [expecting a favourable outcome] even though there is an inherently corrupt component in it.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Copy of the Qur'ān.

⁸⁵ *maṣlahah*

⁸⁶ *Iqtidā'a al-Širāṭ al-Mustaqīm*, 308. Section: Veneration of days originally not venerated in the sharī'ah. These are contiguous quotes. Admirers of Ibn Taymiyyah in our time, who oppose the Mawlid, misquote this by adding another line from the paragraph that follows, thereby distorting the meaning of this one.

Does it mean that we agree to everything these scholars of ḥadīth have said or written in their books? Of course not. For example, we Ḥanafis do not agree with opinions of Imam Ibn Ḥajar that are not according to our madh'hab. Similarly, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Nāṣir al-Dimashqi praised Ibn Taymiyyah – even if they did not follow his deviant opinions themselves. Imām Aḥmed Zarrūq al-Mālikī explained this issue well:

What is the answer to the objection that Taqīyuddin Ibn Taymiyyah has rejected these litanies [like Ḥizb al-Baḥr] and has refuted them in a vituperative manner?

We reply: Ibn Taymiyyah is a Muslim who is known for his proficiency in ḥadīth⁸⁷ [and Islamic sciences] but is criticised in [certain] beliefs he held. He is accused of having a defective intellect, what would he know of gnosis?⁸⁸ The shaykh, the Imām Taqīyuddin Subkī was asked about him and he replied: "He was a man whose knowledge was greater than his intellect." The important thing is that he is reliable in what he narrates, not in his inferences or opinions. Allāh tāālā knows best.⁸⁹

What if the same thing is said about the imāms mentioned earlier: 'we accept their transmission but not their opinion?' The key here is that of majority. Ibn Taymiyyah's aberrations contradict majority of Úlamā; on the other hand Mawlid is supported by an overwhelming majority of prominent scholars. Only Wahābī/Salafi denominations or their confused cousins in the Subcontinent – the Deobandis fret about the Mawlid.

Even if celebrating the Mawlid was opposed⁹⁰ by a number of scholars, it would still be considered a valid difference of opinion without each party castigating the other. We consider celebrating the Mawlid as praiseworthy and recommended, not an obligatory action. But those who oppose it write books, conduct seminars against the Mawlid and scream 'bidāh' at every opportunity and dissuade people from attending it; even though we do not see the same fervour in condemning other bidāh – or is Mawlid the only bidāh left in our times of utmost righteousness and piety?

⁸⁷ *hifz wa'l itqān*

⁸⁸ In other words: When his *āql* is accused of being flawed, how can he be expected to reach *īrfān*?

⁸⁹ Shaykh Zarrūq in Preface of *Sharḥ Ḥizb al-Baḥr*, vide Nab'hānī in *Shawāhidu'l Ḥaqqaq*.

⁹⁰ Which is hypothetical; because in reality, all scholars of Ahlu's Sunnah support it and in fact, it is a differentiating factor between Sunnis and heretics.

What about those who celebrate Mawlid? Are they all pious? Does every one of them pray follow sunnah and avoid ḥarāms? Do all their men wear beards and women cover themselves?

The answer is: Yes, not every one of them is observant. But there is a huge difference between a fāsiq who celebrates Mawlid in the love of Muṣṭafā ﷺ, and cites noble úlamā of Islām as his proof – and the fasiq who derides it as a bidāh sneering at ‘not following the sunnah’. The purpose of the Mawlid is to remind everyone that the love for Muṣṭafā ﷺ should be more than love for anything or anyone else in the creation. When they hear and learn about Muṣṭafā ﷺ, his lofty character and his attributes, people will be drawn towards him and it is thus hoped that they may be mindful of the sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ in the future. That is how our elders invited people to Islām by commemorating the Prophet ﷺ, describing his ﷺ blessed life and describing his ﷺ blessed age. The full title of the book known as *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* is: *The Collection of Authentic Narrations Concerning the Sayings, Traditions and the Times of RasūlAllāh ﷺ*. Our scholars have insisted the Mawlid to be free from everything forbidden by the shariāh and practices contrary to the shariāh. For example, singing of young boys, collection of funds from Non-Muslims to celebrate Mawlid, musical instruments, mention of false or concocted stories instead of authentic and established narrations etc. are all rejected. We end our discussion quoting *Fatāwā ar-Riḍawiyah*:

...to recite and to listen to [Mawlid] which comprises of things repudiated by the shariāh is impermissible, such as false narrations, concocted stories, poetic verses that are contrary to Sacred Law, especially such verses which are disrespectful to Prophets and Angels; this malady is rife even though such words are blasphemies.⁹¹

Citing Imām Aḥmed Zaynī Daḥlān, he writes:

One form of showing reverence to RasūlAllāh ﷺ is to recite the Mawlid and stand in prayer on the night of his ﷺ blessed birth, and to stand up in respect upon the mention of his ﷺ birth; and to hold banquets and other good deeds...⁹²

We ask Allāh tāālā to fill our hearts with the love Muṣṭafā ﷺ.

⁹¹ *Fatāwā ar-Riḍawiyah*, 23/722

⁹² Ibid, 731.

Appendix D

FAMOUS BOOKS ON MAWLID

Prominent úlamā have written books on Mawlid; many of these works are published, and even some unpublished manuscripts are available online as parts of collections, such as those made available by the King Saud University accessible on <http://makhtota.ksu.edu.sa>; also see <http://www.al-mostafa.com>.

1. ***Mawlid al-Árūs***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.597]. Manuscript in KSU.
2. ***Al-Tanwīr fī Mawlid al-Bashīr an-Nadīr***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.597]. Manuscript in KSU.
3. ***Mawlid an-Nabiy***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.774]
4. ***Al-Mawrid al-Hanīy fī'l Mawlid as-Sanīy***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.774]. Manuscript in KSU.
5. ***Árf al-Tárif bi'l Mawlid al-Sharíf***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.833]
6. ***Al-Mawrid al-Sādī fī Mawlid al-Hādī***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.833]
7. ***Jāmiy al-Aāthār fī Mawlid al-Mukhtār***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.833]
8. ***Al-Lafz ar-Rāyiq fī Mawlidi Khayr al-Khalāyiq***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.833]
9. ***Al-Fakhr al-Álawī fī'l Mawlid an-Nabawi***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.833]
10. ***Al-Mawārid al-Hanīyyah fī Mawlidi Khayr al-Bariyyah***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.911]
11. ***Mawlid***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.911]
12. ***Itmāmu'n Niýmati ála'l Áālam bi Mawlidi Sayyidi Waladi Ádam***, Ímādūddīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr [d.911]

Bājūrī wrote a commentary on this work titled *Tuhfatū'l Bashār ʻálā Mawlidī Ibni Ḥajar*.

13. *Al-Mawlid ar-Rawīy fī'l Mawlid an-Nabawīy*, Imām Muḥammad ibn Aḥmed famously known as Khaṭīb Shīrbīnī [d.977]
14. *Al-Mawrid ar-Rawīy fī'l Mawlid an-Nabawīy*, Shaykh Nūruddīn Mullā Álī ibn Sulṭān al-Qārī [1014]
15. *Íqd al-Jawhar fī Mawlid an-Nabiyy al-Az'har*, which is the most famous of all and is known as *Mawlid Barzanjī*; written by the muhaddith Shaykh Jaáfar ibn Ḥasan al-Barzanjī [1177] which is the most famous and widely published books on Mawlid.
16. *Al-Fajr al-Munīr fī Mawlidī'l Bashīr an-Nadīr*, Shaykh Tā hā ibn Mīhnā [1178] Manuscript in KSU.
17. *Mawlid an-Nabiyy*, Shaykh Shihābuddīn Aḥmed al-Dardīr [1201]. Manuscript in KSU.
18. *Al-Yumn wa'l Isáād bi Mawlidī Khayr al-Íbād*, Shaykh Muhaddith Imām Muḥammad ibn Jaáfar al-Kittānī [d.1345]
19. *Jawāhir al-Naẓm al-Badīy fī Mawlid al-Shafīy*, Shaykh Yūsuf ibn Ismāyīl an-Nab'hānī [1350]
20. *Ḩawl al-Íhtifāl bi Dhikrā al-Mawlid an-Nabawīy al-Sharīf*, Shaykh Sayyid Muḥammad Álawī al-Mālikī al-Ḥasanī [1425]
21. *Idhāqatu'l Athām li Māniyī ámal al-Mawlid wa'l Qiyām*, by Rayīs al-Mutakallimīn Imām Naqī Álī Khān [1295] along with *Rashāqatu'l Kalām fī ḥawāshi Idhāqatu'l Athām*, annotations by the author's son Alahazrat Imām Aḥmed Riḍā Khān [1340] is a 300 page treatise on the permissibility of celebrating Mawlid.
22. *Iqāmatu'l Qiyāmah ʻálā Ṭāyīni'l Qiyāmi li Nabiyyi Tihāmah*, Alahazrat Imām Aḥmed Riḍā Khān al-Baraylawī [1340]

SOURCES

Ḩusn al-Maqṣid fī Āmal al-Mawlid: Imām Jalāluddīn Suyūṭī, Ed. Shaykh Muṣṭafā Ábd al-Qādir Áṭā, Dār Kotob al-Ílmiyyah, Lebanon, First Edition, 1405/1985.

Al-Ḥāwī lī'l Fatāwī: The 24th monograph in volume one, pages 189-197, Published by Dār Kotob al-Ílmiyyah, Lebanon, First Edition, 1403/1983.

Some references and information in the footnotes is taken from the Kotob al-Ílmiyyah edition; The list of books is taken from ***Ḩawl al-Iḥtifāl bī Dhikrā al-Mawlid an-Nabawiy al-Sharīf*** of Shaykh Sayyid Muḥammad Álawī al-Mālikī al-Ḥasanī. May Allāh tā'ālā reward the shaykh and perfume his resting place.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Imām Jalāluddin Abdu'r Rahmān al-Suyūṭī [849-911] is a famous scholar and author. He memorised the Qur'ān by the time he was eight years old. He then proceeded to memorise various texts in fiqh, grammar and received authorisation to teach Arabic in his seventeenth year. He studied under prominent scholars like Álamuddīn al-Bulqīnī and Kāfiyājī. He was a prolific writer who has written hundreds of books – big and small, many of which have been published and widely available even in our time. He was a master of *Tafsīr*⁹³, Ḥadīth, *Fiqh*⁹⁴ and Arabic Grammar, and many other sciences. Al-Kittānī in *Fahras* says that according to his student Dāwūdī, Suyūṭī wrote close to 600 works and some biographers have mentioned a thousand works.

In an autobiographical note, he has listed the books he has written in the following categories:

- *Tafsīr* and related sciences; *Qirā'āt* – Readings.⁹⁵
- Ḥadīth and related sciences (including Ḥadīth anthologies and commentaries)
- Fiqh and related sciences
- Short books and epistles on miscellaneous topics
- Books on various aspects of the Arabic Language, including Grammar, Rhetoric⁹⁶ and Morphology
- Principles of Fiqh
- *Tasawwuf*
- History and Literature

⁹³ *Tafsīr*: commentary of the Qur'ān

⁹⁴ Jurisprudence

⁹⁵ The science of Qur'ān recitation is known *tajwīd*; and the variations in readings of the Qur'ān is the science of *qirā'āt*.

⁹⁶ For brevity, *Bādīy*, *Bayān* and *Māānī* are collectively referred as Rhetoric.

Some of his famous works:

1. *Jamū'l Jawāmiy* - a consolidated collection of 50,000 ḥadīth from over a hundred books of ḥadīth
2. The other half of *Tafsīr Al-Jalālayn*
3. *Al-Itqān fī Ūlūmi'l Qur'ān*
4. *Ad-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafsīri'l Ma'thūr*
5. *Lubābu'n Nuqūl fī Asbābi'n Nuzūl*
6. *Muṣhamāt al-Aqrān fī Muṣhamāt al-Qur'ān*
7. *At-Taḥbīr fī Ūlūmi't Tafsīr*
8. *Tanāsuq ad-Durar fī Tanāsubi's Suwar*
9. *Sharḥ ash-Shāṭibiyah*
10. *Kashf al-Mughat'ā fī Sharḥi'l Muwat'tā*
11. *Isāf al-Mubat'tā bi Rijāli'l Muwat'tā*
12. *At-Tawṣīh ǵalā Jāmiy as-Śāfiḥ*
13. *Ad-Dībāj ǵalā As-Śāfihi Muslim ibn-Ḥajjāj*
14. *Mirqāt as-Súud ilā Sunāni Abī Dawūd*
15. *Sharḥ Ibn Mājah*
16. *Tadrīb ar-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb an-Nawāwī*
17. *Sharḥ Alfiyyatu'l ǵrāqi*
18. *Áyn al-Isābah fī Maárifati's Šāfiḥah*
19. *Al-La'āli al-Maśnūah fī'l Aḥādīthi'l Mawdūah*
20. *Sharḥ as-Śudūr bi Sharḥi Ḥāl al-Mawtā wa'l Qubūr*
21. *Al-Budūr as-Sāfirah ǵalā Umūri'l Ākhirah*
22. *Takhrīj Aḥādīth Sharḥ al-Áqāyid*
23. *Al-Ashbāh wa'n Nažayir*
24. *Tanwīr al-Ḥalak fī Imkāni Ru'yati'n Nabiyyi wa'l Malak*
25. *Sharḥ al-Mulḥah*
26. *Mukhtaṣar al-Íḥyā'a*
27. *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥuffaž*
28. *Ṭabaqāt an-Nuḥāh*
29. *Ṭabaqāt al-Usūliyyīn*
30. *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufassirīn*
31. *Ṭabaqāt al-Kuttāb*
32. *Ḩusn al-Muḥādarah fī Akhbāri'l Mišri wa'l Qāhirah*
33. *Tārikh al-Khulafā'a*
34. *Al-Ḥāwī li'l Fatāwī* – which contains a number of monographs



ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Abu Hasan is a student of Sacred Law. Hanafi, Maturidi and aspirant to the Qadiri path, he is an ardent admirer and follower of Imam Ahmed Rida Khan al-Baraylawi رض. He translates bits and pieces from classical texts in the course of his learning, for his own revision and as helpful notes to beginners like himself. Some of his articles and translations can be found on *tanwir.org* and *ridawi.org*.



و أبیضن ییتسنی الکھام بیچھے شمال الیستاری ییسمہ لالار اول

و یو

و یضم الیله ایم النبی الی ایمہ إدا قال فی الخمس المؤذن اشہد
و شفیق لہ من ایمہ لسیچلہ فذ العرش محمد و هذہ محمد

